

February 13, 2007

The Honorable Dan Weinberg
Chairman, Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee
Montana State Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

RE: SB 336 – Prohibiting the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Dear Senator Weinberg and Members of the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee:

On behalf of the Yellowstone City-County Board of Health, I wish to go on record in supporting SB 336, which would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products. As you are well aware, tobacco is the only legal product that takes lives when used as intended. SB 336 is an important measure in the prevention of tobacco-related deaths and disabilities. Consider the following:

- ◆ Nearly 1,500 Montanans die each year of tobacco-related diseases.
- ◆ Nationally, approximately 2 million people either die or quit using tobacco products each year.
- ◆ Teen tobacco use in Montana hovers around 19%.
- ◆ 90% of people who have ever used tobacco reporting regular usage of the product before they were 18 years old.

With the introduction of flavored tobacco products with names like "Winter MochaMint" and "Twista Lime", our children are being targeted by the tobacco industry. Studies have shown that teens are twice as sensitive as adults to tobacco advertising. Furthermore, teens are extremely brand responsive and the tobacco industry has done a masterful job in creating some of the most recognizable brands in history.

The Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee can take a tremendous step in the right direction by passing SB 336. Prohibiting the sale of flavored cigarettes, cigars and spit tobacco products will take away some of the pressure our children face and assist them to remain tobacco-free. With the tobacco industry spending nearly \$50 million/year in Montana, environmental supports and strong public policies, such as SB 336, will help to ensure that it is easier for all Montanans to make the right choice when faced with the decision to use tobacco products.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 336. I look forward to working with you on this and other important public health measures. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at barbaras@ycchd.org or 651-6420.

Sincerely,

Barbara Schneeman, Manager
Communications and Advocacy

Cc: Senator Kim Gillan, Senator Lynda Moss, Senator Greg Lind



"Committed to the protection and promotion of public health."

Gallatin City-County Health Department

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Chairman, Senate Public Health, Welfare & Safety Commission
Montana State Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Re: SB 336, Prohibiting the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Dear Senator Weinberg and Members of the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee:

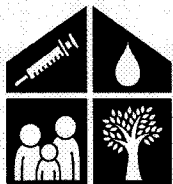
As Health Officer of the Gallatin City-County Health Department, I would like to express my support of SB 336 that proposes to ban the sale of all flavored tobacco products. The public health impact of tobacco use is well documented. Yet, despite many good efforts to stem the tide of disability and death resulting from the sale of addictive tobacco products, tobacco companies have continued to thrive through the use of successful marketing programs and the increased targeting of youth to new enticing products—such as flavored tobacco.

Many studies demonstrate the vulnerability of youth when faced with in onslaught of marketing that encourages and pressures them into unhealthy choices. The marketing and sale of flavored tobacco now stands as a prominent challenge to any anti-tobacco lobbying efforts previously made. Teen tobacco use in Montana is nearly 20%—a large portion of future adults that will likely be facing similar addiction and related health issues that many long-term tobacco users deal with today. SB 336, if passed, will be an instrumental measure in raising the bar for tobacco prevention in Montana—particularly among our youth.

Thank you once again for considering this piece of legislation. I would be happy to speak with you on this and other important public health measures. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 406-582-3120.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Nelson,
Health Officer



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

1930 Ninth Avenue
Helena, MT 59601
PH: 406.4HEALTH or 406.443.2584
Fax: 406.457.8990

February 13, 2007

The Honorable Dan Weinberg
Chairman, Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee
Montana State Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

RE: SB 336 – Prohibiting the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Dear Senator Weinberg and Members of the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee:

On behalf of the Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department, I wish to go on record in supporting SB 336, which would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products. As you are well aware, tobacco is the only legal product that takes lives when used as intended. SB 336 is an important measure in the prevention of tobacco-related deaths and disabilities. Consider the following:

- ◆ Nearly 1,500 Montanans die each year of tobacco-related diseases.
- ◆ Nationally, approximately 2 million people either die or quit using tobacco products each year.
- ◆ Teen tobacco use in Montana hovers around 19%.
- ◆ 90% of people who have ever used tobacco reporting regular usage of the product before they were 18 years old.

With the introduction of flavored tobacco products with names like “Winter MochaMint” and “Twista Lime”, our children are being targeted by the tobacco industry. Studies have shown that teens are twice as sensitive as adults to tobacco advertising. Furthermore, teens are extremely brand responsive and the tobacco industry has done a masterful job in creating some of the most recognizable brands in history. Flavored tobacco products are sold individually at point of purchase in packaging that makes them indistinguishable from candy, making it even more difficult to enforce laws, which prohibit tobacco use by minors.

The Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee can take a tremendous step in the right direction by passing SB 336. Prohibiting the sale of flavored cigarettes, cigars and spit tobacco products will take away some of the pressure our children face and assist them to remain tobacco-free. With the tobacco industry spending nearly \$50 million/year in Montana, environmental supports and strong public policies, such as SB 336, will help to ensure that it is easier for all Montanans to make the right choice when faced with the decision to use tobacco products.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 336. I look forward to working with you on this and other important public health measures. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at mreynolds@co.lewis-clark.mt.us or 406.457.8910.

Sincerely,

Melanie Reynolds, M.P.H.
Health Officer

Cc: Senators Greg Lind, Mike Cooney, Christine Kaufmann, Dave Lewis, and Terry Murphy

"To Improve and Protect the Health of all Lewis and Clark"



Missoula City-County Health Department
Health Administration
301 West Alder
Missoula MT 59802-4123

February 14, 2007

Dear Senator Lind and Committee Members:

Cigarette smoking has fallen drastically in Missoula County and across the state since 1997. The bad news is that the use of chew, spit and other tobacco product use by youth is on an alarmingly steep rise. The introduction of candy-flavored products is one of the reasons for this increase. Big Tobacco companies may say and even testify that they do not market to children, but it is simply not so.

These products were developed and marketed in order to addict another generation of users. In fact an internal memo from U.S. Smokeless Tobacco in 1994 says it all: "Cherry Skoal is for someone who likes the taste of candy, if you know what I mean."

It is time for Montana to protect its children from the flagrant disregard of their health and well being. As we all know it is easy to get hooked but difficult to quit. We have an opportunity to send a message to these companies that the State of Montana will step up and fight them toe-to-toe.

As Health Officer for Missoula County I fully support SB 336 and ask that you vote "yes" on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ellen Leahy, Director